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CIA 'Spook' Talk Livens Up the Trial

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Trial watchers often have to figure out the meaning of legal terminology in order to keep up with what is happening in court.

With several CIA-related witnesses taking the stand in the Ronald Rewald trial, court watchers also have had to learn the meaning of a number of CIA terms and acronyms.

For those uninitiated to CIA jargon, here are some of the terms and abbreviations — and their meanings — that have emerged in the past two weeks at Rewald's fraud trial:

—**Light-cover facility**: Notional cover or commercial cover: Make-believe companies that exist on a piece of paper used to provide cover for CIA agents overseas. Rewald ran a light-cover facility for agents in the Far East. First it was named H&H Enterprises and then Canadian Far East Trade Corp.

—**Safehouse**: A location that can't be traced to an agency and, in some cases, to a country, which agents use. Eugene Welch, former CIA office chief here, had once helped to establish safehouses in a foreign country, he testified.

—**DCD**: Domestic Collection Division, formerly called the Domestic Contact Division. An overt office with published phone number available to citizens who want to share intelligence about their foreign travels. Rewald first made contact with the CIA in Hawaii through its DCD office.

—**Walk-in**: Someone, such as Rewald, who instigates contact with a CIA DCD and offers assistance — opposed to the other way around.

—**Station**: An overseas CIA office. After the Rewald story broke, the DCD office here often

was misidentified in the media as a station.

—**HFO**: Honolulu Field Office, the way the CIA refers to the DCD office in Hawaii in secret documents recently declassified.

—**Intelligence**: Economic, political and sociological information collected by the CIA.

—**FI**: Foreign Intelligence. What some travelers to foreign countries provide to the CIA. According to CIA cables, Rewald was being considered a potential source of "FI" because he planned to travel extensively in the Far East.

—**FPI**: Foreign Positive Intelligence. "Old-fashioned" version of FI, according to Welch.

—**Backstopping**: Providing light cover for covert agents.

—**Cleared contact**: A person associated with the agency who has been cleared to receive certain classified information.

—**Exit interview**: A CIA officer's last meeting before retirement, where his or her security clearance is revoked.

—**Exit oath**: A retiring CIA officer's promise never to discuss classified material.

—**Note**: The large majority of people who call DCD offices after finding the CIA listed in the phone book. Welch said one of his secretary's duties was to "screen the nuts" who called in.

—**"Need to know"**: Also known as "compartmentalization," a security method within the CIA which keeps employees from learning anything more than they need to accomplish whatever task they are assigned to.

—**Security classifications**: As far as Welch knows, the classifications are restricted, confidential, secret and top secret. He testified he does not know how many levels above top secret the classifications reach because he did not "need to know."